

# Fully, Freely, & Entirely

Volume 17, Number 2

Newsletter of the Delaware Heritage Commission

Winter, 2006-07

## **PIERRE S. DU PONT IV GOVERNOR OF DELAWARE Coming early 2007**

Change is never easy, particularly in politics and government. It is unsettling and stressful; and, since it is usually threatening to various elements of the status quo, always contentious. Public policy change usually takes time and a great deal of effort.

This book is about how Delaware changed its government from a system dominated by a network of rural interests to an opportunity society in which economic growth and greater individual choices were the focus.

It took more than a dozen years for Delaware to complete its transformation. It began in the mid-1960s with two lawsuits filed in federal court that



successfully challenged the rural-based apportionment in Delaware's General Assembly. Delaware's Constitution of 1897 had divided the legislature on the basis of geography rather than population, with Sussex, Kent and New Castle counties each having ten representatives and five senators, even though

they had far from equal populations. Even with the five representatives and two senators allotted for the city of Wilmington, Delaware's two downstate counties had controlled the legislative process.

By 1976 times weren't bad; they were awful. Five deficits in seven years had produced the lowest bond rating and the highest income-tax rate — 19.8 percent — of any state in the nation. The high tax rates were a vivid red flag, warning corporations not to expand

operations in Delaware, so the state had the second-highest unemployment rate in the nation as well.

So in 1976 the voters changed course, and in November elected Pete du Pont as their 73rd governor.

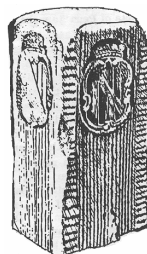
What happened next — four years in which a new administration tried to get the state back on its feet followed by four years of steering a course toward prosperity — was painful, and it took a while. But in the end, Delaware had a vibrant, market-driven economy; state government spending that had remained flat for eight years; and top tax rates that were less than half of what they had been. Employment was up, credit ratings were up, deficits had vanished, and budgets were balanced. Most important, the state's Constitution had been amended to make it difficult to return to the economic and spending policies of the bygone days.

It came to pass that the public was willing to give fresh ideas a try because things had been so bad; because the ideas put forward were interesting and workable and produced good results, and because the opposition Democratic party not only signed on to the essential elements of the program, but often took the lead in advocating substantial reforms.

Over eight years Delaware changed itself, and the results have been positive, prosperous and long-lasting. A quarter of a century and three governors later, the duPont administration's policies are still in place and working successfully.

-L. Nagengast

### **Tour the Kent County Mason-Dixon Line with the Heritage Commission**



**FEBRUARY 10, 2007  
\$10 per person  
Limit 10**

**Call 302-744-5077 for more  
information and to register.**

## First State Heritage Park at Dover

Dover has been the seat of Delaware state government since 1777 and is home to one of the most beautifully preserved capitol complexes in the nation. Dover contains two historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places, and encompasses beautiful natural areas, including the historic Green, the St. Jones River and an array of trees and flowers carefully tended by the City of Dover.

### *First Saturdays in The First State*

A variety of special programs and events are developed for the first Saturday of each month throughout the year. First Saturday events are highlighted by guided tours of Delaware's state capitol building-Legislative Hall. The most up to date information about each month's events can be found at [www.destateparks.com/heritagepark](http://www.destateparks.com/heritagepark).

### *Audio Tours and Special Programs*

Self-guided audio walking tours of nearly 30 sites located in Dover's historic district can be rented Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Delaware Visitor Center, 406 Federal Street (#4 on the map). Rental fee for the audio tour is \$5.

Throughout the year, The First State Heritage Park at Dover offers a variety of walking tours, living history programs and special events. Schedules vary seasonally. More information can be found at the Delaware Visitor Center or at [www.destateparks.com/heritagepark](http://www.destateparks.com/heritagepark).



*The First State Heritage Park at Dover* is a partnership of state agencies (including the Delaware Heritage Commission), under the leadership of Delaware State Parks, working in collaboration with city and county government, non-profit organizations and the private sector to create Delaware's first urban "park without boundaries."



**The Park links historic and cultural sites in Delaware's capital city.**

- Delaware Public Archives
- Legislative Hall
- Legislative Mall (above)
- Delaware State Visitor Center
- Biggs Museum of American Art
- State House Museum
- Delaware Supreme Court
- Site of the Golden Fleece Tavern
- The Green
- Kent County Courthouse
- Christ Episcopal Church
- Museum Square
  - Johnson Victrola Museum
  - Delaware Archaeology Museum
  - Museum of Small Town Life
- Constitution Park (left)
- Wesley United Methodist Church
- Rose Cottage
- The Presbyterian Church of Dover
- Richardson & Robbins Building
- Woodburn: the Governors House
- Hall House



## **Commission Helps the Wilmington Senior Center Celebrate 50 years DHC Grant funding for Book Project**

The Wilmington Senior Center was officially established on July 6, 1956, the first senior center in Delaware. The Center resulted from the vision of the Junior League of Wilmington and the Community Services Council of Delaware. These two groups of volunteers and professionals identified the need for a place where seniors could gather for activities and recreation and where they could be helped, through counseling and referrals, to adjust to the changes in their lives due to aging. The Center opened in Bassett Hall at Grace Methodist Church, but growth was so rapid that relocation was required. A building on Jefferson Street was subsequently rented and equipped for Center use.

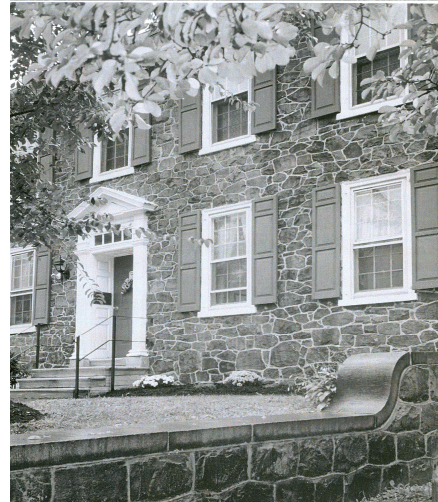
The vision of the WSC founders was fulfilled as hundreds of active seniors were attracted to the Center for trips, teas, classes, counseling and card parties.

By 1964, the Center was outgrowing its Jefferson Street home and so, with the vision and encouragement of the Junior League of Wilmington, the Nemours Foundation, and Mrs. Jessie Ball duPont, the Center purchased its present home in historic Brandywine Village. Renovations and new construction were completed in 1967, and the building was dedicated for use by senior citizens in April. During the next several years, other buildings were acquired through gift or purchase for expanded activities, including programs designed to assist with basic human needs.

These services included a subsidized employment program, a congregate and homebound meals program, case management, transportation, and other services to help support those in the greatest social and economic need.

The Center of the present has built on the strong foundations of its past and has a stated vision to be Wilmington's premiere resource center for older adults, their families and the community. The Center continues to provide a mixture of programs and services intended to sustain and enrich lives. The WSC is proud that in 2003 it received a Community Impact Award from the United Way of Delaware because of the positive, measurable difference WSC is making through outreach to seniors.

-S. Getman



**Edward Tatnall House, built circa 1850  
Home of the Wilmington Senior Center**

### ***The Historic Brandywine Village***

Situated on the Brandywine River, Brandywine Village possessed the fundamental requirements necessary for a successful trade in flour — abundant water power, access to a large supply of wheat, and convenient access to the nearby ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia. By 1764, there were at least eight mills operating in Brandywine Village owned and operated by the Tatnalls, Leas, Prices, and Canbys. The flour produced here made Brandywine Village an internationally-known community.

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### **Dandy Dansey Commission lends helping hand to save rare flag**

The Commission provided partial funding to the Historical Society of Delaware for the preservation of the only known surviving Delaware Regimental flag from the American Revolution – **The Dansey Flag**. The flag is named for Captain William Dansey of the British Army who captured it from the Delaware Militia a few days before the Battle of the Brandywine in September of 1777. Dansey took the flag home to England as a war trophy, where it stayed until 1927 when the Historical Society of Delaware bought it from the Dansey family and brought it back to Delaware. Since that time, the flag has been one of the most requested items in the HSD collection. When the flag returned to Delaware it went on display for an extended period of time (about 50 years). However, given the fragile nature of the flag, it has been off display now for almost 20 years. The flag has recently undergone conservation treatment.



## A Slice of Newark's Literary Life in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

One thing that has remained unchanged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century is that anyone traveling overland between Philadelphia or New York and Baltimore and Richmond has to pass through northern Delaware. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American poet and author Edgar Allan Poe passed through northern Delaware quite often because his travels were largely from Richmond to the south and New York to the north that included extended stays in both Philadelphia and Baltimore. This wasn't the only connection Poe had with Delaware, or with Newark for that matter.

Poe shared influences with two of Delaware's earliest literary figures, John Lofland and Robert Montgomery Bird. Poe and Lofland actually knew one another, and evidence of their shared influences exists. Mary E. Phillips, in her 1926 biography *Edgar Allan Poe: The Man* suggests Lofland may have had a hand in influencing Poe's story "Berenice." In addition there is some evidence to suggest that Lofland and Poe may have shared concurrent interests in mesmerism. Around the same time that Poe was composing his story "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," which uses mesmerism as a plot device, Lofland had published, in Baltimore, his article "The Philosophy of Mesmerism." Poe may have even paid Lofland some notice in his story by referring to a character, a medical student, given the name Mr. L-1. Lofland, in fact, had been a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania before moving to Baltimore where he interacted with Poe.

Edgar Allan Poe was always very curious about cutting-edge subjects like mesmerism and metempsychosis. Delaware's first novelist, Robert Montgomery Bird, was also interested in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul and used it as a plot device in his most innovative novel *Sheppard Lee*. Many circumstances and characterizations ventured forth in Bird's *Sheppard Lee* also show up in stories by Poe like "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather," and "Some Words With a Mummy."

Edgar Allan Poe's connection with Newark is sustained in the town's collective memory through legend, especially with regards to the supposed curse he threw on the town and kept alive, in various ways, at Newark's Deer Park Tavern. The truth is that the current building that houses the Deer Park was built after Poe had died, but the building that was there before it, St. Patrick's Inn, may have been one of the town's watering holes for Poe.

When it comes to hard evidence concerning Poe's connection to Newark, the article by former University of Delaware English Professor Ernest J. Moyne proves definitive. In his article "Did Edgar Allan

Poe lecture at Newark Academy?" published by the University of Delaware in its twenty-sixth series of *Delaware Notes* in 1953, Professor Moyne lays out the best evidence for Poe's connection to Newark. Moyne investigated two separate visits by Poe to Newark. One was an extended one which lasted about a week not long before his death in 1849, and the other which was a single lecture delivered on December 23, 1843. Regarding the week-long visit Poe had made to lecture at the Newark Academy, Moyne found gaps in the evidence. However, there are some circumstantial grains that suggest some truth to the event in spite of the paucity of hard evidence. One of those grains is contained in a clipping from the August 3, 1927 edition of the *Newark Post*, which quoted an earlier eye witness source that declared that regarding Poe's alleged substance abuse, "The fact that a small portion of liquor was sufficient to upset the delicate mental poise of this greatest of all American writers..." The same article went on to report that at the lectures, "All the teachers and all the classes heard him (Poe) for an hour. He was always prompt when the Academy bell in the steeple rang the hour of his lecture. All heard him with attention and pleasure, even the youngest pupils, boys of fourteen or fifteen years. He drew from memory nearly all the poems which he used as examples and illustrations." This is hardly a portrait of a man suffering from substance abuse. In fact, near the end of his life, Poe had reportedly sworn off what were then called "ardent spirits." It is not likely that Poe visited any of Newark's watering holes during this period.

However, his earlier brief, and more substantiated, visit may have been a different matter. Professor Moyne provides substantiation in his article. Poe had been on a lecture series in late 1843 and early 1844. Moyne found evidence that Poe had lecture dates up and down the east coast beginning with a lecture in Baltimore's Egyptian Hall in the summer of 1843. In November, 1843, Poe gave a lecture in Philadelphia and on November 27 at the Franklin Lyceum in Wilmington, Delaware. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, William S. Graham, the Principal of Newark Academy, made an announcement that a lecture series would be given during the Academy's winter term that included several literary luminaries. Moyne suggests that Graham arranged with Poe to join the series during the latter's visit to Wilmington on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The date they set was December 23, 1843. According to a report Principal Graham wrote, using the *non d'plume* "Academicus" in the January 2, 1844 issue of the *Delaware State Journal*, the lecture went well and Poe was invited back to lecture again in January of 1944. However, there is no evidence that this ensuing lecture occurred.



## By Steven Leech

Another major literary figure from the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a connection to Newark was actually born in Delaware. George Alfred Townsend (below) was born in Georgetown, Delaware in 1841. He began a journalistic career as a Civil War correspondent and over the remainder of his career actually rivaled his early contemporary Horace Greeley in national popularity. Townsend was also a novelist and short story writer. His most popular novel was published in 1884, entitled *The Entailed Hat*, about the notorious Delaware mass murderer and slave catcher Patty Cannon, her exploits, capture and death. This novel was followed two years later, in 1886, by *Katy of Catoctin*, which was about the conspiracy behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, its connection to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry and the villainy of John Wilkes Booth. Both novels were very popular in their day and enjoyed a number of later editions. The most recent edition of *The Entailed Hat* was published by Nanticoke Books in 2000.

Townsend had two specific connections to Newark. Townsend's father, Stephen Townsend, was an itinerant Methodist minister who led the Townsend family to live in Newark, Delaware from 1851 to 1853. George Alfred Townsend attended Newark Academy, which accepted men as young as Townsend, who was at that time 10. This event occurred only three or four years after Edgar Allan Poe had reportedly lectured at the same facility.



Townsend's second connection to Newark was a literary one. In his 1880 collection of short stories, *Tales of the Chesapeake*, was one entitled "The Ticking Stone." The setting for this story is the greater Newark, Delaware, area. It is the story about a man named Fithian Minuet, and the story begins in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. During this time Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon were in the environs of Newark while seeking to establish the state borders of Maryland and Delaware with that of Pennsylvania. Incidentally, as reported in the Delaware Tour Guide published by the Federal

Writers' Project in the late 1930s, Mason and Dixon reportedly used St. Patrick's Inn in Newark as their headquarters; the same location on which the Deer Park stands today, keeping alive Poe's Newark legacy. In Townsend's "The Ticking Stone," Charles Mason was also attempting to manufacture a chronometer in response to the English King's challenge, and promise of a hefty reward, to anyone who could produce a mechanism to accurately measure longitude. To make a long story short, just as Mason completed producing his own chronometer, the baby Fithian Minuet swallows the device whole. To quote from Townsend's story, Mason later claimed, "that a child had eaten up 20,000 pounds belonging to him at a single mouthful." With Mason's chronometer ticking away in him for the remainder of his life, Fithian Minuet lived a charmed existence. Living as an adult in Christiana, Minuet made a successful living as a clock maker, got married and was beloved by his neighbors. When his wife died, Fithian was broken hearted and was later found dead at his late wife's grave at the Welsh Tract Baptist Church just south of Newark. It was by his wife's side that he was buried. So well manufactured was Charles Mason's chronometer that it continued to tick inside Fithian's body long after he had died. Some claim it continues to tick to this day and anyone who can find his grave site and put an ear to his tombstone can hear it ticking still.

Evidently, Townsend's *Tales of the Chesapeake* enjoyed several successive editions. The book's third edition contained an endorsement from the American author Mark Twain, who said, "I read it more than half through the first evening, picking out the plums, such as 'The Big Idiot,' and greatly enjoyed the entertainment."

George Alfred Townsend and Mark Twain were no strangers to one another. In fact they were good friends. There is a photograph taken by the pioneering American photographer Matthew Brady of the two men sitting with one another. During the winter of 1867-8, while Townsend acted as correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Cincinnati Enquirer*, both shared a house in Washington, D.C. Both George Alfred Townsend and Mark Twain lived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mark Twain died in 1910 while Townsend died in 1914.

**This and other articles related to the history of Newark will be available in late 2007 in the new book *Histories of Newark*.**

**To learn more about George Alfred "GATH" Townsend, order the Delaware Heritage Press book, *GATH's Literary Work and Folk* (\$5).**

**Call 302-744-5077**

## Tribute to Firefighters

### ***"Fighting the Dragon: Firefighting in the State of Delaware"*** **At Delaware State Visitors Center**

Fire is a chemical reaction that releases heat and light. Controlled fire can be a source of warmth, light, and power. Uncontrolled, however, fire can be destructive, frightening, unstoppable, and deadly. The firefighting men and women of Delaware who risk their lives to save others form the nucleus of this exhibit. During a tour of the gallery, visitors may learn about the unique culture of volunteer firefighters and the service they provide in making our lives and communities safer. The exhibit highlights the human element of firefighting—the nature of firefighters' work, their working conditions and equipment, and the history of the volunteer system in Delaware.



On May 10, 1956, the Citizens Hose Fire Co. #1, drove its new American La France 700 series 1000 GPM pumper fire truck from Smyrna to join six other companies—Volunteer Hose (Middletown), Townsend, Cheswold, Leipsic, Dover and Little Creek—to help Clayton's Company fight the spectacular fire at St. Joseph's Industrial School (above).

### **William Penn Indenture to be Preserved by New Castle Historical Society**

In March 1681 King Charles II granted William Penn land that was to become Pennsylvania. In August 1682 the Duke of York gave Penn two sets of papers — the first set gave Penn the land in a twelve mile circle around New Castle and the second set was for the land south of New Castle to Cape Henlopen. In October 1682 William Penn arrived in New Castle to meet with citizens and present his credentials to the King's Commissioners. At that time Penn declared himself proprietor and Governor of Pennsylvania, New Castle, St Jones (Kent County), and Whorekill (Sussex County)."

This indenture signed by William Penn sells 1,000 acres of land to Thomas Roberts for 20 pounds sterling. An indenture is an early example of a deed for the sale of land in the new world. It is written on animal skin parchment with both carbon and iron gall ink. This document has Penn's signature and the seal is intact. Penn and men appointed by him ruled the lower three counties until 1776.

## **Pottery Book Ready for Glazing William Hare, Wilmington Potter**

The Commission is preparing a manuscript on the life and work of William Hare and his pottery for the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. The work will be available this spring.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the citizens of Delaware relied heavily on the local production of necessary goods. This period saw the production of earthenware and stoneware by many Delaware potters. Unfortunately, almost none of these potters signed their ware and almost no archaeological investigations have been conducted at their shop sites.

Given the limited documentation of historic potteries in Delaware, William Hare stands as an important reference point. He was the only potter in Delaware known to mark his wares. Given modern development in Wilmington (where the majority of Delaware shops were), Smyrna Landing, and Milford, it is unlikely that archaeological remains are present at most of the sites.



Hare's was a long-lived enterprise (1839-1885) relative to the common nineteenth century pattern of shops closing or changing ownership every few years. The urban location of the Hare shop resulted in a rich archival record, contrasting sharply with seasonal, farmer-potters in more rural settings.

Hare may also be considered the last standing traditional potter in Delaware. Hare's death and the closing of the shop corresponded to the death knell for traditional potteries on the East Coast. Traditional shops could not compete successfully in face of numerous factors including: dramatic increase in affordable glass containers; decreased cost and increased availability of industrialized ceramics from New Jersey and Ohio; decreased need for traditional agricultural vessel forms as populations became less self-sufficient and increasingly urban; development of metal canning facilities to process farm products; and increased labor competition from the rapidly expanding ceramic industry in New Jersey.

-C. Espenshade



# BOOK TO BE REPRINTED

## *African American Education in Delaware:*

### *A History Through Photographs*

The Commission is preparing to reprint the Delaware Heritage Press book, *African American Education in Delaware*. This new edition will have a “coffee table” look with improved picture quality. It will include author revisions and be available in hardcover. **Coming February 2007.**

The history of African Americans is one of the most underdeveloped topics in historical scholarship. African American history in Delaware is even more neglected with only two published books, both written in 1997 and covering the period before the Civil War. This book hopefully will generate interest in African American history that covers not just the slavery period, but also the rich history of the African American struggle in the post-Civil War period through more recent times. It was in this period that African Americans in Delaware struggled to establish free and independent communities. This included the establishment of institutions that would help them build strong and enduring communities. The centerpieces of African American communities in Delaware and throughout the nation, for that matter, were the churches. Flowing from them were other community institutions necessary in the creation of strong communities such as civic and fraternal organizations, businesses, and labor organizations. Above all else, African Americans understood the empowering effect of an education.

Following the Civil War, religious groups like the Society of Friends and the Methodist Episcopal Church championed educational opportunities for African

Americans in Delaware as they had done in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Before the Civil War, there were only seven schools in the state for African Americans. Most likely all but one were organized by the Society of Friends. There were three in Wilmington, two in Camden (these may have been the two Friends Schools at Little Creek and Murderkill), one in Newport, and one in Odessa.

While religious groups worked diligently to establish African American education, a public debate brewed over the issue during the antebellum period in Delaware

that continued after the Civil War into the twentieth century. Advocates for public supported education for African Americans equated religious based-education with civilization. The *Dover American Watchman* newspaper pointed out that: “Religion and Civilization, the grand restorers of man to his pristine state, have uniformly been accompanied by some

degree of education.” In the case of African Americans, the newspaper argued that education would uplift them from their present condition, which was “not the effect of natural, but artificial causes.” The reasoning was that education would therefore help make them good citizens by preparing “the minds of this people...for that state of freedom which is their right, and which they will one day most assuredly obtain.” The author went on to emphasize: “Keep the people in ignorance, lest they attain knowledge of their rights; withhold from them instructions, lest they become dissatisfied with government.”

-B. Skelcher

Photos: Top: Blocksoms Colored School, Sussex County. Bottom: Odessa Colored School, New Castle County



## Delaware Book Fair and Authors Day

**Saturday, April 14, 2007, 10 am - 3 pm**

**Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village  
Route 13, Dover, Delaware  
Free Admission, Lunch available**

Each year Delaware Book Fair and Authors Day gets bigger and better. 2007 will mark the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of this one-of-a-kind book showcase. Delaware Book Fair and Authors Day celebrates Delaware writers and Delaware books! New books, used books, Delaware books and more will be available for purchase at the original and best event of its kind in the First State. Over 70 authors will be in attendance from all over the state and the peninsula with a variety of books available for purchase. This event is held close to the summer season; buy a book for your vacation! Romance to history, mystery to true crime, there is something for everyone at the Delaware Book Fair.

### **New Books**

- Delaware authors will be in attendance with their novels, true stories, poetry and more. Buy a book, chat with the author, have your book signed.

### **Delaware Books**

- Come to Delaware Book Fair to meet authors, purchase books, get your book signed, have lunch and visit the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village. This event is free of charge. (There is a \$5 charge for lunch.) At the event sign up for the free gift basket raffles.

### **Used Books**

- Selected Delaware libraries will be selling used books at the Book Fair. The books selected for the sale are quality used books. You won't find the cheap paperback with the cover ripped off at this event!

### **Information Tables**

- Local publishers will be on hand with information on how to get your book published. Local Museums will also have promotional materials and public information.

### **Delaware Heritage Commission**

121 Duke of York Street

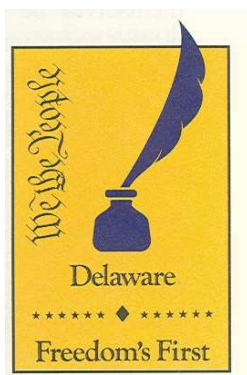
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**"Fully, freely, and entirely approve of, assent to, ratify and confirm"** is the language Delaware's delegates used to ratify the United States Constitution.